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ABSTRACT

An effective teacher must continue to learn, problem-solve, and respond to the evolving needs of his or her students. Ideally a culture of inquiry, reflection, and self-evaluation should develop. Voluntary inquiry-based reflection identifies problems and issues within a school and allows teachers and administrators to develop professional study experiences that address these problems by integrating reading, reflecting, and collaborating to bring about school change. It creates a teacher-centered environment that recognizes and respects the differences in teachers' theoretical backgrounds, prior knowledge, familiarity with children's literature, classroom experiences, and expertise. Mutual coaching, monitoring, and evaluation are part of ongoing strategies, with or without the help of an outside educator. This is better than 1 day of training, one-size-fits-all presentations, with minimal administrator participation and lack of followup. Recertification credits or continuing-education units may be given for professional study. A transcript from interviews, teacher conversations and student conferences, study-group documentation, and one-on-one conferences are featured, all from schools in Virginia. An appendix of reproducible forms for self-evaluation, study-group documentation, and one-on-one conferences is provided. (Contains 58 references.) (RKJ)

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